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GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF LISBON

**SURVIVALS**  
OF  
**PREHISTORIC RACES**  
IN  
**MOUNT ATLAS AND PYRENEES**

MEMOIR DESTINED TO THE 10<sup>th</sup> SESSION  
OF  
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ORIENTALISTS

BY  
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## SURVIVALS OF PREHISTORIC RACES

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### MOUNT ATLAS AND THE PYRENEES

In July last, while visiting the Parliamentary Library at Ottawa, Canada, and casually looking over the numbers of *Kosmos* for 1887, I was surprised at meeting with the following paragraph, headed *Les Pygmées de la Vallée de Ribas*, (New Series, vol. VIII, p. 59): «Professor Miguel Maratza has discovered in the valley of *Ribas* (province of Gerona, Spain) a community of very curious people whom the country people call *Nanos* (Dwarfs?)». «Their height does not exceed 1 m. 10, to 1 m. 15. These Pygmies are well built, and have a robust appearance. Their hair is red. Their face forms a perfect square. Their cheekbones are prominent, their jaw heavy, their nose flat, and their eyes, which are slightly oblique, resemble those of the Mongols. They have only a few scattered hairs on their face».

I could not find any further reference to the subject either in *Kosmos*, or in such other scientific periodicals as I was able to consult; but, as Stanley had not then told the world about his Congo dwarfs, and the subject of pygmy race had not attracted the large amount of public attention which it since has, it is probable that the paragraph in question escaped notice and has since been for-

gotten. It could not have been suggested by my having got tidings of the existence of dwarfs South of Mount Atlas, for my Insi servant first told me of the dwarfs who lived in Akka, the country adjoining his own, in January or February 1888. His statements and some confirmations that had so far come to light, were communicated in Sept. 1888 to the Geographical Section of the British Association, but without any expression of opinion on my part.

It is extremely interesting to note that *Ribas*, the home of the dwarfs of the Pyrenees, is the name of a place connected with a dwarf tribe in central Africa. In an article in the *Popular Science Monthly* (vol. xxxvi, p. 664, 1890) we are told that «on the shores of the Liba is another people called Kenkob, only three or four feet high». Another man gave Dr. Koelle a very similar account of a tribe called *Betsan*, living on the River *Riba*, evidently the same as *Liba*.

The announcement of the survival of a dwarf race in the Eastern Pyrenees has during the present summer been followed by another as respects a larger prehistoric race in the Eastern recesses of those little known and to a large extent unexplored mountains.

In the *Popular Science Monthly*, for May last, p. 39, in an article entitled «Cave dwellings of Men», we are told that at a recent meeting of the Royal Geograph. Society of Madrid, Dr. Bride gave an account of his exploration in a wild district in the province of Cáceres, which he represented as inhabited by a strange people who speak a curious patois and live in caves, and inaccessible retreats. They have a hairy skin, and have hitherto exhibited a strong aversion to mixing with their Spanish and Portuguese neighbours. Roads have been recently pushed into the district inhabited by these *Jourdes*, and they are beginning to learn the Castilian language, and to attend the fairs and markets.

This announcement was not altogether unexpected by me from my having met ten years ago, in Berthelot's

*Antiquités Canariennes* (1880), a full account of a similar discovery, made about the end of the 15th Century, of a community of harmless savages in a secluded district in Spain, whose only religious rites consisted in their offering fruits and flowers to their Deity on the tops of mountains. As they were not true believers, and were not likely to become such, as they could not speak in an intelligible language, the only thing that could be done with them was to burn them. It is not unlikely, as Berthelot suggests, that they were survivals of a primitive Berber race, such as peopled the Canary Islands, and North Africa; and we are reminded that in their offerings of fruits and flowers they resembled the Guanches, and also the primitive races of the West Indies, and the simple Toltecs of Mexico, the followers of the divine apostle of peace, Quetzalcoatl.

What is the language spoken by these *Jourdes*? Is it connected with Berber, or with Keltic, or with Basque? The problem can easily be solved, and I trust will be cleared up at the proposed Congress at Lisbon on the 20 Sept. In July last through Dr. Leitner I drew the attention of the Organizing Committee at Lisbon to the great importance of at once communicating with Professor Maratza and Dr. Bride, respecting their discoveries in the Eastern and the Western Pyrenees; it was urged that they should be invited to attend, and to bring with them, if possible, one or more of the *Jourdes* and *Nains*. If these suggestions can be carried out, no doubt most interesting and important results will follow. It is difficult on an Ethnological point of view to exaggerate the importance of the discoveries of Professor Maratza and Professor Bride, for if they can be substantiated, (as we have every reason to expect), they will supply a connecting link between the prehistoric cavedwellers, the brownies, and the «nocanny» dwarfsmiths of European folklore and fairy tales with similar races now existing from mount Atlas to the Kalahari desert of South Africa.



The well known red cap of Marocco, called *Fez*, from the city where it is principally made, and a form of which is worn by the Portuguese, and especially by the people of the Azores, is of no little interest, as it is used by the dwarf Laplanders, and was worn by the dwarfs of Keltic and Teutonic tradition, who are therefore known to folklore as *Red Caps*.

It is hoped that before the end of the year a very competent explorer will have reached the secluded homes of the Atlas dwarfs; but it is likely that even more important discoveries will have been previously made in the Pyrenees, that will be a warning to the large class that, being overburthened with a little knowledge, know every thing that is worth knowing, and therefore look on anything outside their range as an imposture or a delusion. Thanks to such people, Schweinfurth and Miani, when they announced the existence of their dwarf Akkas, were set down as Munchausens. As the Greater part of the vast unknown country South of Mount Atlas has never been visited by a European, those who scouted the idea that there could be there tribes of dwarfs hitherto unknown, will be effectually silenced should the *Jourdes* and the *Nains* prove to be now in existence within easy reach of health seekers and Cook's tourists.

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